

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 30, 2008. Claims 418 and 419 are now pending in the application, with Claims 385, 386, 389, 391, 392, 393, 401 and 409 having been canceled herein. Claim 418 is now the only independent claim herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 389 was objected to for being dependent upon a cancelled claim. Claim 389 was also objected to for language that is allegedly convoluted. While Applicants appreciate the Examiner's suggested terminology that would overcome the objections, the objections are nonetheless believed to be obviated by the cancellation of Claim 389.

Claims 385, 386, 389, 391 to 393, 401 and 409 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,839,829 (Freedman) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,891,636 (Kawai). Inasmuch as the rejected claims have been cancelled, the rejections are believed to be obviated. Nonetheless, newly-presented independent Claim 418 is believed to be allowable over the art of record for at least the following reasons.

The invention relates to an image forming system that includes an advertiser apparatus, an information control apparatus and an image forming apparatus. The advertiser apparatus inputs an advertisement size of advertisement data, and transmits the advertisement data and the input advertisement size thereof to the information control apparatus. The information control apparatus receives a designation of a print sheet size and output information, and determines a layout which corresponds to a type of the output information, to secure an advertisement area on the determined layout. The advertisement

data is selected having the advertisement size corresponding to the size of the advertisement area secured in the layout, from the advertisement data transmitted to the information control apparatus so that the image forming apparatus generates the print data to lay out the output information and the selected advertisement data, in accordance with the determined layout.

Referring specifically to the claim language, newly-added independent Claim 418 is directed to an image forming system comprising an advertiser apparatus, an information control apparatus and an image forming apparatus, wherein the advertiser apparatus provides advertisement data, the information control apparatus manages output information, and the image forming apparatus prints print data generated from the output information and the advertisement data and charges for printing of the print data so that a printing fee is reduced in accordance with the advertisement data being printed, the advertiser apparatus comprising a memory which stores a first computer program, and a processor that executes the first computer program stored in the memory included in the advertiser apparatus, the first computer program comprising computer executable code that performs the steps of inputting an advertisement size of the advertisement data, and transmitting the advertisement data and the input advertisement size thereof to the information control apparatus, and the information control apparatus comprising a memory which stores a second computer program, and a processor that executes the second computer program stored in the memory included in the information control apparatus, the second computer program comprising computer executable code that performs the steps of receiving a designation of a print sheet size and the output information, the designation being provided in accordance with a user's operation, determining a layout which

corresponds to a type of the output information designated in the designation receiving step, to secure an advertisement area on the determined layout, and selecting the advertisement data having the advertisement size corresponding to the size of the advertisement area secured in the layout determining step, from the advertisement data transmitted to the information control apparatus in the advertisement data transmitting step so that the image forming apparatus generates the print data to lay out the output information designated in the designation receiving step and the advertisement data selected in the advertisement data selecting step, in accordance with the layout determined in the layout determining step.

The art of record is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of newly-added independent Claim 418, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of an information control apparatus i) receiving a designation of a print sheet size and output information, the designation being provided in accordance with a user's operation, ii) determining a layout which corresponds to a type of the output information designated in the designation receiving step, to secure an advertisement area on the determined layout, and iii) selecting advertisement data having the advertisement size corresponding to the size of the advertisement area secured in the layout determining step, from the advertisement data transmitted to the information control apparatus by an advertiser apparatus so that an image forming apparatus generates print data to lay out the output information designated in the designation receiving step and the advertisement data selected in the advertisement data selecting step, in accordance with the layout determined in the layout determining step.

Freedman merely discloses to print information data and advertisement data so that the advertisement data is placed at the end of the information data or inserted in the information data printed on a halfway page. However, this reference does not disclose or suggest printing the advertisement data at a place (advertisement area) secured on the printing layout determined in accordance with the type of the information data to be printed. Thus, the reference of Freedman does not disclose or suggest at least the features of an information control apparatus i) receiving a designation of a print sheet size and output information, the designation being provided in accordance with a user's operation, ii) determining a layout which corresponds to a type of the output information designated in the designation receiving step, to secure an advertisement area on the determined layout, and iii) selecting advertisement data having the advertisement size corresponding to the size of the advertisement area secured in the layout determining step, from the advertisement data transmitted to the information control apparatus by an advertiser apparatus so that an image forming apparatus generates print data to lay out the output information designated in the designation receiving step and the advertisement data selected in the advertisement data selecting step, in accordance with the layout determined in the layout determining step.

Kawai discloses a copy machine 11 in which an advertisement image memory 63 for storing a plurality of advertisement images is connected to a control unit 61. However, this reference does not teach that the advertiser registers the advertisement data together with the advertisement size information thereof. In addition, the reference of Kawai discloses to display a list of the printable advertisements on a display unit 69, so that the user operates a key of an advertisement function selection unit 62 to select a

desired one of the displayed advertisements, or the listed advertisements are automatically selected in a rotation manner. However, this does not disclose or suggest selecting the advertisement data of the size corresponding to the size of the advertisement area secured in the layout determined based on the type of the information data to be printed. That is, if the advertisement data is selected as the reference of Kawai discloses (i.e., user selection or rotation manner selection), this may result in occurrence of such a problem that a layout function is spoiled or the advertisement data is reduced, so that the advertisement data is printed in an unintentional manner which the advertiser does not wish. Accordingly, Kawai is not seen to disclose or to suggest anything that, when combined with Freedman, would have resulted in the features of an information control apparatus i) receiving a designation of a print sheet size and output information, the designation being provided in accordance with a user's operation, ii) determining a layout which corresponds to a type of the output information designated in the designation receiving step, to secure an advertisement area on the determined layout, and iii) selecting advertisement data having the advertisement size corresponding to the size of the advertisement area secured in the layout determining step, from the advertisement data transmitted to the information control apparatus by an advertiser apparatus so that an image forming apparatus generates print data to lay out the output information designated in the designation receiving step and the advertisement data selected in the advertisement data selecting step, in accordance with the layout determined in the layout determining step.

In view of the foregoing, newly-added Claims 418 and 419 are believed to be allowable.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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